



True Confidence

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When you think about some of the great leaders you may have either read about or worked for, their self-confidence most likely comes to mind. But I bet they were also very much down to earth, weren't they? Leadership is a balance of both confidence and humility. A lack of humility and false sense of confidence is the definition of arrogance. Few people truly respect an arrogant leader, maybe their position, but certainly not the person. Arrogant leaders receive compliance at best, and often for only a very short period. It is only a matter of time before an arrogant leader's house of cards come tumbling down from selfish motives and agendas.

Winston Churchill stated, "In the course of my life, I have often had to eat my words, and I must confess that I have always found it a wholesome diet". There are few guarantees in life, but the fact that we all make mistakes is certainly one of them. Mistakes and failures are our greatest opportunity for growth – we can self-reflect, analyze, and improve from them. A dilemma often pondered among leaders is just how much can we actually change about ourselves. Do we really change or just become much more aware of our weaknesses? You should always be yourself, but in doing so, often times our mistakes remind us of issues we have struggled with our entire life. That struggle should not bring us down, but remind us that we are alive and aware.

Truly confident leaders are secure enough to embrace and share their humility. In the long run, their humility makes them stronger; for without humility, our strengths disappear to others due to our arrogance. To quote the great poet Alexander Pope, "A man should never be ashamed to own that he has been in the wrong, which is but saying in other words that he is wiser today than he was yesterday." Confidence without humility is dangerous. We should be confident in the areas we are strong in; yet humble enough not to hide our areas of weakness.

Finding the right balance of confidence and humility is key. To maintain our confidence, we should not dwell on our mistakes too long or too frequently. Over contemplating mistakes and living in the past is a waste of valuable time and energy; as well as inhibiting the positive attitude that we need to make course corrections and get back on track. Picking up the pieces and landing on our feet is the image we need to portray as leaders, thereby helping to prevent our subordinates from the fear of making their own mistakes.

Authentic humility is the most sincere form of confidence. As leaders we need to understand that being authentically humble humanizes us, allows us to build stronger bonds with our crew, and earn loyalty from peers and subordinates alike. By surrounding ourselves with people who are strong in the areas that we are weak in, we will persuade them to do the same - and so the circle of synergy spins. It is said that every person we meet knows something we ourselves do not; learn from these individuals! Confident yet humble leaders are lightening rods for talent, respect, and loyalty. Moreover, the people they attract will have a strong desire to go above and beyond in order to accomplish the mission.

Leadership Competencies Addressed: *Influencing Others, Respect for Others, Self-Awareness and Learning.*